

**REMARKS**

Claims 6-11, 13-16 and 18-28 are pending. By this amendment, claims 6, 9, 10, 19, 21-23 and 26-28 are amended for the Examiner's consideration. The above amendments do not add new matter to the application and are fully supported by the specification. Reconsideration of the rejected and objected claims in view of the above amendments and the following remarks is respectfully requested.

***Examiner Interview***

Applicants appreciate the courtesies extended to Applicants representative during the interview conducted on January 14, 2005. In this interview, Applicants discussed the sprue and union hole relationship. The Examiner appeared to agree with the Applicants' characterization and indicated that further consideration would be afforded to claims 6 and 19, as further discussed below.

***Allowed Claims***

Applicants appreciate the indication that claims 15, 16 and 24 are allowed. Applicants appreciate the indication that claims 6-11, 13, 14, 18-23 and 25-28 contain allowable subject matter. Applicants submit that all of the claims are in condition for allowance for the following reasons.

***Objection to Claims***

Claims 9, 10, 21-23 and 26-28 were objected to based on informalities. Claims 9, 10, 21, 22, 23, 26 and 27 are amended according to the Examiner's helpful suggestions. Accordingly, Applicants request withdrawal of the objection.

***35 U.S.C. §112 Rejection***

Claims 6-11, 13, 14, 18-23, 25, 26 and 28 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, 2<sup>nd</sup> paragraph. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 26 is amended to recite “said union hole”. This is proper in view of the recitations in claim 6.

Applicants are of the opinion that claims 6 and 19 are proper. Although it is true that the union hole can be used as the sprue, these features are not the same. More accurately said, though, the sprue is used to form the union hole, since the sprue is formed prior to the union hole. This relationship is recited in claims 6 and 19.

This is consistent with, for example, claim 26 which recites, in part:

said sprue is processed to form said union hole which is formed at the bottom portion of said cylinder.

This would indicate that the sprue and the union hole are different, and do not represent the same element, e.g., one being used to form another.

Applicants further submit that this is consistent with the specification and the drawings. Specifically, the specification describes the union hole and the sprue as two different items, albeit the sprue is used to form the union hole. Basically, the sprue is formed by the molding process; whereas, the union hole is then formed in the sprue. Applicants respectfully submit that one of ordinary skill in the art would readily understand these distinct features and differences.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection over claims 6-11, 13, 14, 18-23, 25, 26 and 28 be withdrawn.

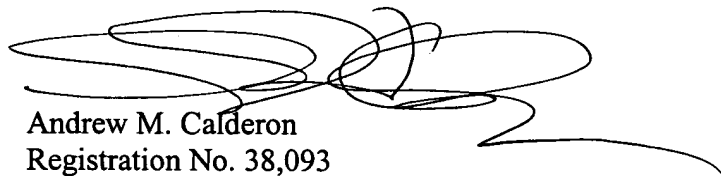
Serial No.: 09/695,874

10

### CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants submits that all of the claims are in condition for allowance. The Examiner is respectfully requested to pass the above application to issue. The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below, if needed.

Respectfully submitted,



Andrew M. Calderon  
Registration No. 38,093

McGuireWoods, LLP  
Suite 1800  
1750 Tysons Blvd.  
McLean, VA 22102  
(703) 712-5426

\\COM450711.2